

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An Internet-based brand marketing communication system for enabling a vendor and its agents to carryout product-related marketing communication functions along the demand side of the retail chain, comprising:

an Internet-enabled database server, operably connected to the Internet, for storing a plurality of UPN/TM/PD/URL links relating to each consumer product registered with said Internet-enabled database server and being offered for sale by the vendor in commerce,

wherein a plurality of consumer products are registered within said Internet-enabled database server, and

wherein the term UPN designates the Universal Product Number identifying a particular consumer product, the term TM designates the Trademark assigned to the particular consumer product, the term PD designates the Product Descriptor assigned to the particular consumer product, and the term URL designates the Universal Product Locator specifying the location of a particular information resource on the Internet related to the identified consumer product;

a first Internet-enabled subsystem, operably connected to the Internet, for enabling the vendor's brand marketing manager to create and manage said plurality of UPN/TM/PD/URL links within said Internet-enabled database server, so that said plurality of UPN/TM/PD/URL links create a desired brand image for each of said plurality of consumer products; and

a second Internet-enabled subsystem, operably connected to the Internet, for enabling a consumer to launch and display a virtual consumer product information (CPI) kiosk from an HTML-encoded document displayed on a Internet-enabled client computer, so as to enable said consumer to access said plurality of UPN/TM/PD/URL links from said Internet-enabled database server relating to one or more of said plurality of consumer products so that the consumer can access and display on said Internet-enabled client computer, a plurality of information resources on the WWW specified by said plurality of UPN/TM/PD/URL links to enable the consumer to acquire knowledge about said one or more of said plurality of consumer products; and

wherein said virtual CPI kiosk is launched and from said HTML-encoded document and displayed on said Internet-enabled client computer when the consumer selects a consumer product information request (CPIR) enabling server-side component tag embedded within said HTML-encoded document displayed on said Internet-enabled client computer,

wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component tag is associated with a CPIR-enabling server-side component stored in a first Internet-based information server operably connected to the Internet, and

wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component is encoded with the UPN, TM and/or PD corresponding to said one or more UPN/TM/PD/URL links stored in said Internet-enabled database server.

2. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said virtual CPI kiosk is a multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk having an advertising display mode and a CPI link display mode,

wherein an advertising spot is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said advertising display mode, and

wherein said plurality of UPN/TM/PD/URL links are displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said CPI link display mode.

3. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component tag is embedded within an HTML-encoded documents located at Web-based location selected from the group selected from an electronic commerce (EC) based retail store, an EC based retail catalog, an on-line auction site, and an Internet product advertisement.

4. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 2, which further comprises a third Internet-enabled subsystem for enabling vendors and their advertising agents to store an advertising spot order within said Internet-enabled database server, wherein said advertising spot order includes an advertising spot that is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said advertising display mode, and wherein said plurality of UPN/TM/PD/URL links are displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said CPI link display mode.

5. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said virtual CPI kiosk is a multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk having an promotional display mode and a CPI link display mode,

wherein a promotional spot is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said promotional display mode, and

wherein said plurality of UPN/TM/PD/URL links are displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said CPI link display mode.

6. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 5, which further comprises a third Internet-enabled subsystem for enabling vendors and their promotional agents to store an promotional spot order program within said Internet-enabled database, wherein said promotional spot order includes a promotional spot that is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said promotional display mode, and wherein said plurality of UPN/TM/PD/URL links are displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said CPI link display mode.

7. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said virtual CPI kiosk is a multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk having an advertising display mode, a promotional display mode, and a CPI link display mode,

wherein an advertisement spot is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said advertisement display mode,

wherein a promotional spot is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said promotional display mode, and

wherein said plurality of UPN/TM/PD/URL links are displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said CPI link display mode.

8. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 7, which further comprises:

a third Internet-enabled subsystem for enabling vendors and their advertising agents to store an advertising spot order within said Internet-enabled database server, wherein said advertising spot order includes an advertising spot that is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said advertising display mode; and

a fourth Internet-enabled subsystem for enabling vendors and their promotional agents to store a promotional spot within said Internet-enabled database server, wherein said promotional

spot order includes a promotional spot that is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said promotional display mode; and

wherein said plurality of UPN/TM/PD/URL links are displayed on said multi-mode virtual CPI kiosk during said CPI link display mode.

9. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said HTML-encoded document is served from a second Internet-based information server operably connected to said information network.

10. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said Internet-enabled database server serves said UPN/TM/PD/URL links to said Internet-enabled client computer in response to a request for information made by said Internet-enabled client computer.

11. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 10, wherein said Internet-enabled client computer has a Web browser program for producing a Web-browser enabled graphical user interface (GUI) for displaying said HTML-encoded document with said CPIR-enabling server-side component tag embedded therein;

wherein, when said consumer selects said CPIR-enabling server-side component tag embedded within said HTML-encoded document,

(1) said CPIR-enabling server-side component associated with said CPIR-enabling server-side component tag is automatically executed, and a request for information on the consumer product identified by said UPN is automatically carried out against said Internet-enabled database server; and

(2) in response to said request, said Web-browser enabled GUI automatically displays the information retrieved from said Internet-enabled database server for access and use by said consumer; and

wherein said displayed information comprises one or more URLs pointing to one or more information resources on the WWW relating to the consumer product identified by said encoded UPN.

12. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component is encoded with the UPN identifying a particular consumer product registered with said Internet-enabled database.
13. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component is encoded with the TM associated with a particular consumer product registered with said Internet-enabled database.
14. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component is encoded with the PD associated with a particular consumer product registered with said Internet-enabled database.
15. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said Internet-enabled client computer comprises a physical CPI kiosk having an LCD panel that is embedded within or supported upon a shelving structure installed in a retail store environment.
16. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 2, wherein said Internet-enabled client computer comprises a physical multi-mode CPI kiosk having a touch-screen LCD panel that is embedded within or supported upon a shelving structure installed in a retail store environment.
17. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said first Internet-based subsystem enables the vendor and/or its agents to create and manage a list of UPN/TM/PD/URL links for each consumer product within its product portfolio registered with said Internet-enabled database server.
18. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said second Internet-based subsystem enables the vendor and/or its agents to deploy a virtual CPI kiosk for each consumer product registered with said Internet-based database server, and download its corresponding CPIR-enabling server-side component tag for each said consumer product.

19. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 2, wherein said third Internet-based subsystem enables the vendor and its advertising agents to place advertisement spot orders on said virtual CPI kiosks, and run corresponding advertising spots thereon during said advertising display mode.
20. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 19, wherein said third Internet-based subsystem further enables vendors and their advertising agents to produce virtual kiosk advertising directories specifying on which multi-mode virtual CPI kiosks said advertising agents are permitted to place advertising spot orders.
21. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 2, wherein said third Internet-based subsystem enables the vendor and its promotional agents to place promotional spot orders on said virtual CPI kiosks, and run corresponding promotional spots thereon during said promotional display mode.
22. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 21, wherein said third Internet-based subsystem further enables vendors and their promotional agents to produce virtual kiosk promotional directories specifying on which multi-mode virtual CPI kiosks said promotional agents are permitted to place promotional spot orders.
23. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 8, wherein said third Internet-based subsystem enables the vendor and its advertising agents to place advertisement spot orders on said virtual CPI kiosks, and run corresponding advertising spots thereon during said advertising display mode; and wherein said fourth Internet-based subsystem enables the vendor and its promotional agents to place promotional spot orders on said virtual CPI kiosks, and run corresponding promotional spots thereon during said promotional display mode.
24. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said HTML-encoded document is selected from the group consisting of a product image, a product-related document, and a product advertisement.

25. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component is realized as a Java server-side component.
26. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said second Internet-enabled subsystem enables the consumer to launch and display a plurality of said virtual CPI kiosks, and wherein each said virtual CPI kiosk is designed to deliver brand marketing communications specific to a registered consumer product identified by its UPN.
27. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said second Internet-enabled subsystem enables the consumer to launch and display a plurality of said virtual CPI kiosks, and wherein each said virtual CPI kiosk is designed to deliver brand marketing communications specific to a consumer products identified by their TM.
28. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said vendor is either the manufacturer of one or more consumer products or the seller of one or more consumer products bearing the TM of said seller.
29. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component is realized as a CPIR-enabling Servlet.
30. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 29, wherein said CPIR-enabling Servlet is realized using the Java programming environment.
31. An Internet-based brand marketing communication system for enabling a service-provider and its agents to carryout service-related marketing communication functions along the demand side of the retail chain, comprising:
 - an Internet-enabled database server, operably connected to the Internet, for storing a plurality of USN/SM/SD/URL links relating to each consumer service registered with said Internet-enabled database server and being provided by the service-provider in commerce,

wherein a plurality of consumer services are registered within said Internet-enabled database server, and

wherein the term USN designates the Universal Service Number identifying a particular consumer service, the term SM designates the Servicemark assigned to the particular consumer service, the term SD designates the Service Descriptor assigned to the particular consumer service, and the term URL designates the Universal Resource Locator specifying the location of a particular information resource on the Internet related to the identified consumer service;

a first Internet-enabled subsystem, operably connected to the Internet, for enabling the service-provider's brand marketing, manager to create and manage said plurality of USN/SM/SD/URL links within said Internet-enabled database server, so that said plurality of USN/SM/SD/URL links create a desired brand image for each of said plurality of consumer services; and

a second Internet-enabled subsystem, operably connected to the Internet, for enabling a consumer to launch and display a virtual consumer service information (CSI) kiosk from an HTML-encoded document displayed on a Internet-enabled client computer, so as to enable said consumer to access said plurality of USN/SM/SD/URL links from said Internet-enabled database server relating to one or more of said plurality of consumer services so that the consumer can access and display on said Internet-enabled client computer, a plurality of information resources on the WWW specified by said plurality of USN/SM/SD/URL links to enable the consumer to acquire knowledge about said one or more of said plurality of consumer services; and

wherein said virtual CSI kiosk is launched and from said HTML-encoded document and displayed on said Internet-enabled client computer when the consumer selects a consumer service information request (CPIR) enabling server-side component tag embedded within said HTML-encoded document displayed on said Internet-enabled client computer,

wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component tag is associated with a CPIR-enabling server-side component stored in a first Internet-based information server operably connected to the Internet, and

wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component is encoded with the USN, SM and/or SD corresponding to said one or more USN/SM/SD/URL links stored in said Internet-enabled database server.

32. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said virtual CSI kiosk is a multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk having an advertising display mode and a CSI link display mode,

wherein an advertising spot is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said advertising display mode, and

wherein said plurality of USN/SM/SD/URL links are displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said CSI link display mode.

33. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component tag is embedded within an HTML-encoded documents located at Web-based location selected from the group selected from an electronic commerce (EC) based retail store, an EC based retail catalog, an on-line auction site, and an Internet service advertisement.

34. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 32, which further comprises a third Internet-enabled subsystem for enabling service-providers and their advertising agents to store an advertising spot order within said Internet-enabled database server, wherein said advertising spot order includes an advertising spot that is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said advertising display mode, and wherein said plurality of USN/SM/SD/URL links are displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said CSI link display mode.

35. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said virtual CSI kiosk is a multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk having an promotional display mode and a CSI link display mode,

wherein a promotional spot is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said promotional display mode, and

wherein said plurality of USN/SM/SD/URL links are displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said CSI link display mode.

36. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 35, which further comprises a third Internet-enabled subsystem for enabling service-providers and their promotional agents to store an promotional spot order program within said Internet-enabled database, wherein said promotional spot order includes a promotional spot that is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said promotional display mode, and wherein said plurality of USN/SM/SD/URL links are displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said CSI link display mode.

37. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said virtual CSI kiosk is a multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk having an advertising display mode, a promotional display mode, and a CSI link display mode,

wherein an advertisement spot is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said advertisement display mode,

wherein a promotional spot is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said promotional display mode, and

wherein said plurality of USN/SM/SD/URL links are displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said CSI link display mode.

38. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 37, which further comprises:

a third Internet-enabled subsystem for enabling service-providers and their advertising agents to store an advertising spot order within said Internet-enabled database server, wherein said an advertising spot order includes an advertising spot that is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said advertising display mode; and

a fourth Internet-enabled subsystem for enabling service-providers and their promotional agents to store a promotional spot within said Internet-enabled database server, wherein said promotional spot order includes a promotional spot that is displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said promotional display mode; and

wherein said plurality of USN/SM/SD/URL links are displayed on said multi-mode virtual CSI kiosk during said CSI link display mode.

39. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said HTML-encoded document is served from a second Internet-based information server operably connected to said information network.
40. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said Internet-enabled database server serves said USN/SM/SD/URL links to said Internet-enabled client computer in response to a request for information made by said Internet-enabled client computer.
41. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 40, wherein said Internet-enabled client computer has a Web browser program for producing a Web-browser enabled graphical user interface (GUI) for displaying said HTML-encoded document with said CPIR-enabling server-side component tag embedded therein;
- wherein, when said consumer selects said CPIR-enabling server-side component tag embedded within said HTML-encoded document,
- (1) said CPIR-enabling server-side component associated with said CPIR-enabling server-side component tag is automatically executed, and a request for information on the consumer service identified by said USN is automatically carried out against said Internet-enabled database server; and
- (2) in response to said request, said Web-browser enabled GUI automatically displays the information retrieved from said Internet-enabled database server for access and use by said consumer; and
- wherein said displayed information comprises one or more URLs pointing to one or more information resources on the WWW relating to the consumer service identified by said encoded USN.
42. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 41, wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component is encoded with the USN identifying a particular consumer service registered with said Internet-enabled database.

43. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 41, wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component is encoded with the SM associated with a particular consumer service registered with said Internet-enabled database.
44. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 41, wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component is encoded with the SD associated with a particular consumer service registered with said Internet-enabled database.
45. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 41, wherein said Internet-enabled client computer comprises a physical CSI kiosk having an LCD panel that is embedded within or supported upon a shelving structure installed in a retail store environment.
46. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 32, wherein said Internet-enabled client computer comprises a physical multi-mode CSI kiosk having a touch-screen LCD panel that is embedded within or supported upon a shelving structure installed in a retail store environment.
47. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said first Internet-based subsystem enables the service-provider and/or its agents to create and manage a list of USN/SM/SD/URL links for each consumer service within its service portfolio registered with said Internet-enabled database server.
48. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said second Internet-based subsystem enables the service-provider and/or its agents to deploy a virtual CSI kiosk for each consumer service registered with said Internet-based database server, and download its corresponding CPIR-enabling server-side component tag for each said consumer service.
49. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 32, wherein said third Internet-based subsystem enables the service-provider and its advertising agents to place

advertisement spot orders on said virtual CSI kiosks, and run corresponding advertising spots thereon during said advertising display mode.

50. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 49, wherein said third Internet-based subsystem further enables service-providers and their advertising agents to produce virtual kiosk advertising directories specifying on which multi-mode virtual CSI kiosks said advertising agents are permitted to place advertising spot orders.

51. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 32, wherein said third Internet-based subsystem enables the service-provider and its promotional agents to place promotional spot orders on said virtual CSI kiosks, and run corresponding promotional spots thereon during said promotional display mode.

52. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 51, wherein said third Internet-based subsystem further enables service-providers and their promotional agents to produce virtual kiosk promotional directories specifying on which multi-mode virtual CSI kiosks said promotional agents are permitted to place promotional spot orders.

53. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 38, wherein said third Internet-based subsystem enables the service-provider and its advertising agents to place advertisement spot orders on said virtual CSI kiosks, and run corresponding advertising spots thereon during said advertising display mode; and wherein said fourth Internet-based subsystem enables the service-provider and its promotional agents to place promotional spot orders on said virtual CSI kiosks, and run corresponding promotional spots thereon during said promotional display mode.

54. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said HTML-encoded document is selected from the group consisting of a service image, a service-related document, and a service advertisement.

55. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component is realized as a Java server-side component.
56. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said second Internet-enabled subsystem enables the consumer to launch and display a plurality of said virtual CSI kiosks, and wherein each said virtual CSI kiosk is designed to deliver brand marketing communications specific to a registered consumer service identified by its USN.
57. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said second Internet-enabled subsystem enables the consumer to launch and display a plurality of said virtual CSI kiosks, and wherein each said virtual CSI kiosk is designed to deliver brand marketing communications specific to a consumer services identified by their SM.
58. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said service-provider is either the manufacturer of one or more consumer services or the seller of one or more consumer services bearing the SM of said seller.
59. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said CPIR-enabling server-side component is realized as a CPIR-enabling Servlet.
60. The Internet-based brand marketing communication system of claim 59, wherein said CPIR-enabling Servlet is realized using the Java programming environment.
61. The Internet-based consumer brand marketing communication system of claim 1, wherein said Internet-enabled database server comprises an Internet-enabled RDBMS server operably connected to the Internet.
62. The Internet-based consumer service marketing communication system of claim 31, wherein said Internet-enabled database server comprises an Internet-enabled RDBMS server operably connected to the Internet.